

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 3762, which provides for reconciliation pursuant to section 2002 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2016, herein referred to as the Reconciliation Act. This legislation would not only repeal parts of the Affordable Care Act, but would reverse the significant progress we have made in improving health care in America. The Affordable Care Act includes a set of fairer rules and stronger consumer protections that have made health care coverage more affordable, more attainable, and more patient centered. And it is working. About 17.6 million Americans have gained health care coverage as the law's coverage provisions have taken effect. The Nation's uninsured rate now stands at its lowest level ever, and demand for Marketplace coverage during December 2015 was at an all-time high. Health care costs are lower than expected when the law was passed, and health care quality is higher—with improvements in patient safety saving an estimated 87,000 lives. Health care has changed for the better, setting this country on a smarter, stronger course.

The Reconciliation Act would reverse that course. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the legislation would increase the number of uninsured Americans by 22 million after 2017. The Council of Economic Advisers estimates that this reduction in health care coverage could mean, each year, more than 900,000 fewer people getting all their needed care, more than 1.2 million additional people having trouble paying other bills due to higher medical costs, and potentially more than 10,000 additional deaths. This legislation would cost millions of hard-working middle-class families the security of affordable health coverage they deserve. Reliable health care coverage would no longer be a right for everyone: it would return to being a privilege for a few.

The legislation's implications extend far beyond those who would become uninsured. For example, about 150 million Americans with employer-based insurance would be at risk of higher premiums and lower wages. And it would cause the cost of health coverage for people buying it on their own to skyrocket.

The Reconciliation Act would also effectively defund Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood uses both Federal and non-federal funds to provide a range of important preventive care and health services, including health screenings, vaccinations, and check-ups to millions of men and women who visit their health centers annually. Longstanding Federal policy already prohibits the use of Federal funds for abortions, except in cases of rape or incest or when the life of the woman would be endangered. By eliminating Federal Medicaid funding for a major provider of health care, H.R. 3762 would limit access to health care for men, women, and families across the Nation, and would disproportionately impact low-income individuals.

Republicans in the Congress have attempted to repeal or undermine the Affordable Care Act over 50 times. Rather than refighting old political battles by once again voting to repeal basic protections that provide security for the middle class, Members of Congress should be working together to grow the economy, strengthen middle-class families, and create new jobs. Because of the harm this bill would cause to the health and financial security of millions of Americans, it has earned my veto.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, January 8, 2016.

□ 1300

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The objections of the President will be spread at large upon the Journal, and the veto message and the bill will be printed as a House document.

MOTION OFFERED BY MR. SCALISE

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I move to postpone consideration of the veto message to January 26, 2016.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Louisiana is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, this is a simple motion which will postpone further consideration of the President's veto of the bill gutting ObamaCare and defunding Planned Parenthood. This short delay will ensure that the Members of the House and the American people will have the time to fully consider the President's veto and its implications.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the motion.

The previous question was ordered.

The motion was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE), the majority whip, for the purpose of giving us the schedule for the week to come.

Mr. SCALISE. I thank the gentleman from Maryland for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the House will meet at noon for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. Members are advised that first votes of the week are expected at 6:30 p.m. on Monday.

Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for morning hour and noon for legislative business.

On Wednesday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for legislative business. No votes are expected in the House on Thursday or Friday.

Mr. Speaker, the House will consider a number of suspensions next week, a complete list which will be announced at the close of business today.

I want to take a moment to highlight one of those bills. The North Korea Sanctions Enforcement Act by Chairman ED ROYCE is a critical bill, given

current events, which would prohibit North Korea's access to the hard currency and other prohibited goods that allow this oppressive regime to continue its destabilizing behavior.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the House will consider a bill, H.R. 3662, the Iran Terror Finance Transparency Act, sponsored by Representative STEVE RUSSELL. This bill, Mr. Speaker, would block the President from offering sanctions relief to an individual or bank until certifying that the entity has not conducted any transactions with a terrorist organization.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, the House will consider two bills aimed at burdensome rules and regulations by this Obama administration. The first of those, Mr. Speaker, is a bill by Representative ALEX MOONEY, H.R. 1644, the STREAM Act, which is a critical piece of legislation to address the administration's stream protection rule. This is a rule which is designed to shut down all surface mining and a significant portion of underground mining, particularly in the Appalachian region. H.R. 1644 would save taxpayer dollars and protect American jobs.

The second is a joint resolution, S.J. Res. 22, calling for the disapproval of the Obama administration's regulatory overreach on the Waters of the United States. This resolution would express congressional disapproval of an unprecedented power grab that harms the traditional Federal-State partnership in implementing the Clean Water Act and would expand the scope of the EPA to puddles in the backyards of millions of Americans.

Those are the bills that I wanted to highlight and feature.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for the information. I know the majority leader is not here, but I observed, with some irony, how much argument for legislation was included in the scheduling announcement. I think that is not necessarily inappropriate—I will make that point—but I am sure the majority leader will remember that in the future.

I thank the gentleman for the information.

I want to say to him at the outset, we note and we took action on his motion to which we neither asked for a vote nor objected, but that we have delayed the consideration of the veto of the President of the United States, ensuring that the 22 million people that would be removed from health insurance, if the President had not vetoed that bill, will not go into effect.

I want to assure the majority whip, as the minority whip, that that bill will not go into effect whether we vote on it today or we vote for it on the 25th. There are more than sufficient votes on this side of the aisle to support and confirm the President's veto and to ensure that those 22 million people, as well as those who are benefiting

from other portions of the bill, will continue to do so.

I thank the gentleman for that information. I regret that we have delayed that vote, but I am absolutely assured that on the 25th or the 26th, that veto will be sustained by this House. Of course, it will initiate in this House.

I also wanted to say to the gentleman, the Speaker has pointed out that this year, he wants to see real substance considered during the debate on the bill that I just discussed, the Affordable Care Act. There was some discussion by Mr. UPTON that there was an alternative that the Republican side of the aisle had or his committee had. We, of course, never considered—notwithstanding the 62 votes to repeal—an alternative.

I would ask the gentleman if he believes that there will be, during the coming weeks or months, an alternative to the Affordable Care Act considered on this floor.

I yield to my friend from Louisiana.

Mr. SCALISE. I thank the gentleman from Maryland for yielding.

I know that the gentleman from Maryland is aware that Speaker RYAN has laid out a vision that we want to have a bold agenda that we are going to bring forward for 2016. In fact, one of the things that the Speaker laid out is not an agenda that is going to be driven from the top down; it is not agenda that is going to be driven by leadership. In fact, it will be driven by the Members.

One of the things that both the House Republican and House Democrat conferences do in the upcoming weeks is have Member retreats, where our Members can come together and discuss those items. That is what we are going to be doing next: our Members are going to be coming together. We want to build a consensus amongst our membership, again, not from the top down, but one that includes the interests of the Members of our conference to fix the problems that have been created by the President's healthcare law and actually bring forward a patient-centered approach that puts patients back in charge of their healthcare decisions.

Mr. HOYER. I understand that, and I appreciate the gentleman's observations.

I am wondering whether or not our Members would expect, at some time in the future, to have such a bill presented for a vote on the floor so that the American people could see, as I understand the Speaker's premise being that he wants to lay out an agenda so that in this Presidential election, there will be alternatives.

My question to the whip is: Will this House be expecting to vote on an alternative, to consider an alternative with amendments perhaps made in order as well?

I yield to my friend from Louisiana.

Mr. SCALISE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Again, Speaker RYAN's commitment has been that we are going to restore

regular order in the House. What regular order means is that there is not going to be some predisposed outcome by leadership to determine what is going to happen and when it is going to happen, regardless of what the membership feels, regardless of what the committee process produces.

Again, I think what is exciting to our membership about this year is that the Members are going to be able to participate in that process and the committees will be involved in this. I can't tell you what the committees will ultimately do or produce. This is going to be a process that is going to be very open and transparent. People can watch on C-SPAN as hearings are held. It is not going to be some predisposed outcome from the top down. Again, this will be something that will be membership-driven, using the regular order of the House.

Mr. HOYER. Well, I appreciate the gentleman's presentation.

Of course, presumably, if it is transparent, if it is open, then presumably, the Democratic members of the committee of jurisdiction on whatever issue there may be, we think we can work together with you on supporting job creation, reaching a long-term fiscal agreement on permanently replacing the sequester, which your chairman believes is not a reasonable alternative.

We believe we can reach agreement with you hopefully on comprehensive tax reform, although my personal opinion was that the passage of the tax bill a few weeks ago, which I voted against, undermines that possibility.

We also believe we can work together with you on something that this week has been made dramatically clear, that is needed very, very badly, and that is comprehensive immigration reform.

As I said on Ex-Im Bank, I thought there was a majority of votes in both parties for the Ex-Im Bank. Unfortunately, it took a discharge petition to get it to the floor. When it got to the floor, I was correct. It had a majority of the Republicans and all but one Democrat for it.

I think comprehensive immigration reform would pass. In a system that is transparent and open to the American people, what one would do would have a vote here on this floor so the American people can see where each Member is on that issue.

We also believe we can work with you, Mr. Whip, and with the majority leader, the Speaker, and your Members, on restoring voting rights.

Mr. Cantor, when he was here, and Mr. MCCARTHY, the majority leader, he and I were honorary cochairmen—JOHN LEWIS is, of course, the chair—when we went to the Edmund Pettus Bridge in recognition of that march, which ultimately led to the adoption of the Voting Rights Act. We think we can work together with you on that.

I know there are strong feelings on the efforts that the President has taken to make sure that those who

purchase guns in America are not dangerous to their neighbors or to others. We think we can work together with you on that.

Does the gentleman expect a vote on that issue on this floor in the near future?

I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. SCALISE. I thank the gentleman, again, for yielding.

Of course, as the gentleman knows, many of these issues that he discussed are at various stages of the legislative process. Some are in current hearings in committees. Some legislation is being developed or being voted on. Some of those issues that were discussed by the gentleman have already come to the House floor and passed. In fact, many of the bills to get the economy back on track passed this Senate with good, strong bipartisan votes that had been stuck in the Senate.

I encourage the gentleman from Maryland, the minority whip, to work with us in the majority to get our colleagues in the Senate to move forward on some of that important legislation that we have passed out of the House in a bipartisan fashion.

I know the gentleman from Maryland was at the same ceremony as I was earlier this week, where the Navy did, I think, a very important, significant action in naming a class of Naval vessels after our colleague and civil rights hero, JOHN LEWIS. It was an honor to participate in that ceremony, as I know you were there as well, in a very touching, warm moment where you saw House Members come together to pay tribute to our colleague, JOHN LEWIS.

Also, you saw the Navy making such a significant step in saying they are going to develop and build a class of Naval ships that honor civil rights legends, starting with and, in fact, naming the entire class of ships after JOHN LEWIS.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for bringing up that issue. We are all privileged and honored to serve in this House with JOHN LEWIS. There is probably no Member of this House who has been recognized for greater contributions to what America stands for than our colleague, JOHN LEWIS.

It was so appropriate for Secretary Mabus, who is the Secretary of the Navy from Mississippi and former Governor of Mississippi, to not only name this ship, as the gentleman observed, but because it is the first ship. And this ship is all about serving others, about supplying others with that which they need—not only fuel, but also food and supplies—and is so appropriate because JOHN LEWIS lived his life serving others and supplying.

This is not a warship, per se. It is a Naval ship that is going to be critically important to our Navy. The gentleman is absolutely correct that honoring JOHN LEWIS was an appropriate act to take. I think he and I both extend our thanks to Secretary Ray Mabus for taking this action.

□ 1315

Lastly, I have had a long association with Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico, of course, is an integral part of the United States of America. Its citizens are citizens of the United States of America. Like other jurisdictions—whether they be in California or in New York or in the Midwest or the South or the North—who have from time to time found themselves in deep fiscal trouble, Puerto Rico now finds itself in that position.

I had the opportunity to talk a little earlier today with Chairman ROB BISHOP about the hearings that are going on in the Committee on Natural Resources this month with reference to Puerto Rico. I know that Speaker RYAN has indicated that we need to address this issue in an effective way by March 31. I very much appreciate his setting a goal and a timeframe for that.

Can the gentleman give me any additional information as to the status of consideration of Puerto Rico and extending it bankruptcy authority so that it might restructure its debt so that it doesn't undermine its school system, its public safety, its transportation, and other needs of its people?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. SCALISE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Of course, as the gentleman from Maryland knows, Puerto Rico is facing a serious debt crisis and is in need of structural reform. That is critical. That is why our committee is starting the process of examining solutions. In fact, as the gentleman mentioned, next week, on January 12 at 10 a.m., the committee of primary jurisdiction, the House Committee on Natural Resources, led by Chairman BISHOP, as the gentleman mentioned, has the first hearing scheduled on this matter.

In keeping with Speaker RYAN's commitment to regular order, it is important that we allow the committees of jurisdiction to work through these issues to put forward the best solutions to a bad situation.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

I would reiterate to my friend, we really do look forward to working with your side of the aisle on addressing some of the critical problems that I mentioned, that you have mentioned, that Speaker RYAN has mentioned. We hope that those will be open, transparent, and inclusive so that all views can be heard. Ultimately, we hope that proposals and policies do come to this floor for a vote.

It is my understanding that the Speaker also wants to do the 12 appropriations bills, do them discretely, that is, one at a time, and bring them to this floor. We look forward to that process occurring as well.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. SCALISE. I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

I would just say, in the spirit of bipartisanship, at some point I would like to bring up some great blue crabs

from the Gulf of Mexico, and the gentleman can bring up some of those great Maryland blue crabs, and we can do a good taste test and enjoy some of our great cuisines and enjoy some good company.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that offer. I hope his feelings are not hurt when his crabs are left on the table.

I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT FROM FRIDAY, JANUARY 8, 2016 TO MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2016

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet on Monday, January 11, 2016, when it shall convene at noon for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRAT). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

RECOGNIZING CHEROKEE TRAIL'S STATE CHAMPION VOLLEYBALL TEAM

(Mr. COFFMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the girls varsity volleyball team at Cherokee Trail High School in Aurora, Colorado, for winning the 2015 Colorado 5A State championship game on November 14, 2015.

The students and staff who were part of the title-winning Cougar team deserve to be recognized for winning in what has been a season full of challenges. Following the tragic death of one of their players, Celeste James, and a serious injury to another, Amazing Ashby, the Cherokee Trail Cougars showed courage in the face of true adversity to complete their title-winning season which honored their teammates.

In their dominant performances at the State championship, the girls of Cherokee Trail High School's volleyball team proved that hard work, dedication, and perseverance is the perfect recipe for champions. These volleyball players were led to the championship title through the tireless leadership of their head coach, Terry Miller, and his outstanding staff.

It is with great pride that I join all of the residents of Aurora, Colorado, in congratulating the Cherokee Trail Cougars for their State championship.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BRIGADIER GENERAL DIANA HOLLAND

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to

congratulate Brigadier General Diana Holland for becoming the first female commandant at West Point.

I believe Brigadier General Holland's appointment comes at a very pivotal time in U.S. history, when the military pursues to fully integrate women into the military.

Last month, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced his and the services' decision to open all units to women. This decision would not only open 220,000 jobs for women that were previously closed to them, but it would also open the doors for more women to rise in the chain of command. I believe that we need that to happen in our military.

Servicewomen have bravely served our country in and out of combat. Finally, we will be giving them the recognition that they deserve. No longer will archaic policies limit the potential of capable and qualified servicewomen.

The talent and determination of our servicewomen will continue to strengthen our Nation's military, and I am proud to stand behind them.

RETIREMENT OF JOHN GUERRIERO

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this week marked the retirement of John Guerriero, who has covered politics for the Erie Times-News for more than three decades.

John joined the Times-News in 1981 after graduating from college. John's stories have focused on just about anything you can imagine, from local, State, and Federal politics, education issues, to stories involving court cases in Erie and those involving gambling.

With background on so many issues, it is common for John to follow up on action here in Washington with questions on how it might impact the Erie region.

Mr. Speaker, I have long followed his work in the newspaper, but I had the chance to truly interact with John in 2013 when he spent several days with Congressman MIKE KELLY and myself here on Capitol Hill. I was glad to talk with him about representing Pennsylvania's largest congressional district, and about how priorities and concerns across the district often lead to policies discussed here on the House floor.

I wish John the best of luck in retirement and congratulate him on a wonderful career.

I CANNOT BE SILENT

(Mr. AGUILAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to call attention to the issue of gun violence that has seized our Nation. A little over a month ago, my hometown of San Bernardino fell victim to gun violence and was added to a